

In the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A method for providing an enhanced opening system for a sealed container comprising:

providing a package comprising a bag having lines of weakness and a pull-tab opener secured to the bag proximate to the lines of weakness, the pull-tab opener having a pull-tab opening integral therewith, wherein the pull-tab opening is designed to be hooked with hooking means; and

providing suitable markings to convey instructions to use the pull-tab opener to access ~~the contents of the package~~ contents utilizing a larger muscle group as compared to the muscles needed to produce a pinch force, wherein the package is adapted to be opened easily by a person who follows the instructions conveyed by the markings.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising providing words to convey the instructions.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the pull-tab opener is a reusable pull-tab opener.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising securing the reusable pull-tab opener to the bag with reusable securing means or a combination of reusable securing means and permanent securing means.

15. (Withdrawn) A method of providing a system of enhanced product removal from a sealed container comprising:

providing a sealed container having lines of weakness;

providing at least one product disposed within the sealed container; and

providing a pull-tab opener secured to the sealed container proximate to the lines of weakness wherein the pull-tab opener has a pull-tab opening configured to allow a user to hook the pull-tab opener through the pull-tab opening and apply sufficient force utilizing a larger muscle group, as compared to the muscles needed to produce a pinch force, to tear the sealed container at the lines of weakness creating an opening, further wherein the product is oriented proximate to the opening to facilitate easy removal of the product.

16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 wherein the pull-tab opener is a reusable pull-tab opener secured to the bag with reusable securing means or a combination of reusable securing means and permanent securing means.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 wherein the lines of weakness include two substantially parallel lines of perforations and a slit or third line of perforations located substantially perpendicular to and in between the two substantially parallel lines of perforations at one end, further wherein the reusable pull-tab opener covers the two substantially parallel lines of perforations, further wherein the package is comprised of six panels arranged in a rectangular configuration and the substantially parallel lines of perforations extend across a portion of two adjacent panels.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 wherein the lines of weakness include two substantially parallel lines of perforations and a slit or third line of perforations located substantially perpendicular to and in between the two substantially parallel lines of perforations at one end, further wherein the reusable pull-tab opener covers the two substantially parallel lines of perforations, further wherein the package is comprised of six panels arranged in a rectangular configuration and the substantially parallel lines of perforations are contained on a single panel.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 wherein at least a portion of the lines of weakness are perforations that form a V-shape having a perforation junction, further wherein the reusable

pull-tab opener covers the perforation junction.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15, further providing markings to convey instructions to use the pull-tab to access the contents and thus utilize a larger muscle group as compared to the muscles needed to produce a pinch force.

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20 further comprising providing words to convey the instructions.

Please add the following new claims:

22. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the package contents comprise at least one product disposed within the sealed container.

23. (New) The method of claim 22 wherein the at least one product is a disposable garment.

24. (New) The method of claim 23 wherein the disposable garment is an absorbent article.

25. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein the absorbent article is selected from the group consisting of a diaper, training pants, adult incontinence garment and feminine napkin.

26. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the package contents comprises articles of different types and sizes

27. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the bag and pull-tab opener are made from a polymeric plastic film, paper or a paper composite and the pull-tab opening is a finger-sized opening.

28. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the hooking means comprises one to three

fingers or an object, the object having a maximum diameter not greater than about eight (8) cm.

29. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the lines of weakness are torn and an opening is created when the pull-tab opener is pulled.

30. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein the package contents are oriented proximate to the opening to facilitate easy removal.

31. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein at least a portion of the lines of weakness form a V-shape having a perforation junction or a U-shape, wherein the U-shape has two substantially parallel lines of perforations and a slit or third line of perforations located substantially perpendicular to and in between the two substantially parallel lines of perforations at one end.

32. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein at least a portion of the lines of weakness form the V-shape and the reusable pull tab opener covers the perforation junction.

33. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein at least a portion of the lines of weakness form the U-shape and the reusable pull-tab opener covers the two substantially parallel lines of perforations.

34. (New) The method of claim 33 wherein the package is comprised of six panels arranged in a rectangular configuration and the substantially parallel lines of perforations extend across a portion of two adjacent panels.

35. (New) The method of claim 33 wherein the package is comprised of six panels arranged in a rectangular configuration and the substantially parallel lines of perforations are contained on a single panel.

36. (New) A method for providing an enhanced opening system for a sealed container

comprising:

providing a package comprising a bag having lines of weakness and a pull-tab opener secured to the bag proximate to the lines of weakness, the pull-tab opener having a pull-tab opening integral therewith, wherein the pull-tab opening is designed to be hooked with hooking means.

37. (New) The method of claim 36 further comprising:

providing suitable markings to convey instructions to use the pull-tab opener to access package contents utilizing a larger muscle group as compared to the muscles needed to produce a pinch force, wherein the package is adapted to be opened easily by a person who follows the instructions conveyed by the markings.

38. (New) The method of claim 37 further comprising providing words to convey the instructions.

39. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein the pull-tab opener is a reusable pull-tab opener.

40. (New) The method of claim 39 further comprising securing the reusable pull-tab opener to the bag with reusable securing means or a combination of reusable securing means and a permanent securing means.

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

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Title: FLEXIBLE PACKAGES HAVING REUSABLE PULL-TAB OPENERS AND METHODS OF USING SAME

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Conclusion

Claims 22-40 have been added, claim 11 has been amended, claims 1-10 have been canceled and claims 15-21 have been withdrawn. Claims 11-40 are pending in this application.

Applicant respectfully requests a favorable examination of the merits of this patent application. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at 515-233-3865 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

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